



## **NATIONAL MOTORISTS ASSOCIATION**

**Empowering Drivers Since 1982**

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### **Testimony for the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee On Senate Bill 477, April 24, 2018**

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, the National Motorists Association (NMA) strongly opposes SB477 because it will create dangerous high speed emergency situations on our freeways, and may well lead to high speed crashes with serious safety consequences. We have no doubt the bill is well intentioned as no one wants to see emergency and service personnel be at risk. But this bill would raise the risks overall.

Current law requires drivers to move over OR slow down when encountering emergency or service vehicles on the side of our highways, based on the particular circumstances of each individual situation. The current law already causes some dangerous situations as some drivers abruptly move over a lane when that is not a safe action in heavier traffic.

At least the current law doesn't require drivers to slow to a particular speed AND change lanes if possible. Drivers should be totally focused on the vehicles and personnel on the shoulder plus the actions of the traffic around them to make the best decisions on what to do in the very few seconds they have to evaluate everything. The extra distraction to watch their speedometers will sometimes prove to be very dangerous.

Our rural freeways operate very safely with prevailing car speeds of 75 to 80 mph under good conditions, and the fatality rate per mile traveled on our rural freeways is the lowest of any roadway category.

If this bill becomes law it will sometimes have a truck abruptly changing to the left lane and slowing to 55 mph right in front of cars in the left lane at 75 to 80 mph. These cars would cause no risks for the vehicles and personnel on the shoulder. The first car is likely OK to panic brake to slow by 20 to 25 mph. In traffic, each car further back in line will have less and less time to react – many with no view on why this is happening. In the worst case the left lane queue will come down to a very slow speed or even a full stop, and the next car may not recognize the issue and run into the last one in the queue at nearly full speed. When this happens in construction zone queues, we sometimes get fatalities. This law could cause more for the same reasons.

Now add the fairly high percentage of Pure Michigan visitors and other non-resident drivers who will have no information about these required actions if this bill passes, giving more reasons to say no to SB477.

The NMA urges the committee to reject Senate Bill 477 entirely and leave the current law in place unchanged.

Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

James C. Walker, for the National Motorists Association



.	<--Right shoulder-->	
<---- C 69	<----- T 65	<---- C 74
	<---- C 81	<---- C 79

C75 ---->	C81 ---->	T 55 ---->	C78 ---->
C73 ---->			
	<--Right shoulder -->		T ---->

**T 55 -----> If this truck abruptly moves left and brakes to 55 mph to comply with moving left AND slowing to 10 mph below its 65 mph limit to comply with SB477, it will cause a dangerous disruption to the smooth flow of traffic in the left lane, possibly causing a crash in the worst case.**

**But the vehicles in the left lane are already one lane over from the shoulder and have no safety effect for the emergency or service truck on the right shoulder.**

**Requiring vehicles to move over a lane AND slow to 10 mph below their posted limit is unnecessary and dangerous.**

The current law to slow down OR move over should not be modified by SB477.